

IRAQI MEAT MARKETS

Searching for Ways to Compete with Cheap Imports

(Dohuk, Iraq) -- The Iraqi shopping experience is quite unique. Fruits and vegetables are sold at farmers markets and roadside stands. Lamb is sold at one store, while beef and poultry products are sold at another.



Zaravan al-Dourhka manages the J-A Meat Market in Dohuk.

"We sell four kinds of meet in this market. Beef, buffalo, chicken and goose," said al-Dourhka.



Chicken is sold in a 33-pound bag for \$18.66, that's 56-cents per pound. Goose sells for \$1.81 per pound.

The most popular Iraqi meat product is buffalo, water buffalo that's imported from India. India has a herd estimated at 92 million head of buffalo. It's not uncommon

for families in India to grow fruits and vegetables in the back yard while two or three water buffalo graze in the front yard. Most of India's buffalo population is used for their milk and meat.



Photo courtesy of www.historyforkids.org

Lean buffalo meat sells for \$1.20 per pound in Iraqi markets.

Iraq does have a growing cattle industry. Iraqi raised beef, which sells on average at \$4.54 per pound, is having a difficult time competing with cheaper imported meat products.



Lamb is, by most measures, the number one selling meat in the country.

Until Iraq adopts a national farm policy that supports the fledgling cattle industry, Iraqi cattlemen will have to find a way to compete with less expensive imports.

Photos and story by Paul McKellips, U.S. Department of State, Public Affairs GO Team, on assignment in Iraq.

